



# Winter Pasture NRM Update

APRIL/ MAY 2013

## Barossa- Fleurieu Bus Trip

Thirty Barossa producers enjoyed a day on the Fleurieu exploring different pasture production systems through the recent Barossa- Fleurieu Bus Trip. The group visited Bill Fraser's high input dairy farm in Waitpinga which was involved in a project to maximise pasture inputs to provide year round feed involving dry sowing the entire farm to an annual ryegrass and perennial phalaris mix, weekly nitrogen application in winter and spring and conservation of all excess fodder using silage pits. In contrast to this system the group observed a low input system at Alistair Just's 90Ha techno grazing property at Hindmarsh Tiers. This property is stocked with 200 steers through the autumn, winter and spring and has a kikuyu pasture base. The steers are moved every second day into individual 'cells' which are set up using an electric fence system attached to a quad bike. These cells are divided depending on the pasture growth aiming to eat the pasture evenly and then allow a pasture rest period. The group also visited Maylands sheep property in Parawa to discuss the pros and cons of running a direct to butcher lamb production system which involved having an intricate knowledge of lamb growth rates to ensure a turn off of 50 lambs per week. This property also provided an opportunity to view a perennial plantain and chicory pasture which many producers in the Barossa are considering trialling. The day provided a great variety of pasture management techniques and ideas which invigorated and challenged the group's current thoughts and also provided a great opportunity to network with producers from the local community and other districts.

## Upcoming Events

- AMLR NRM Board's Carbon Farming Initiative and Trading Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May- Hahndorf [Further Info](#)
- Compost and Soil Condition Symposium – Thurs 9 May Nuriootpa- [Further Info](#)



Exploring Fleurieu pasture and production systems on the recent bus trip.



## Regional Landcare Facilitator Bus Tour

The Winter Pasture Project was recently invited by the AMLR NRMB to host part of their region wide tour for the South Australian Regional Landcare Facilitators offering an opportunity to see local production systems and the Project within these systems. The role of the Regional Landcare Facilitator is to help Landcare and farming systems groups meet the challenges of food security, climate change, best practice land management and biodiversity. It is funded by the Caring for Our Country Scheme. The group were taken on a tour of Michael and Dick Evans' property in Eden Valley observing their extensive fencing and revegetation of creek lines, pasture and grazing rotation system and their sheep and cattle production system. This included a demonstration using the Project's temporary electric fence Rappa system. The group recognised the important work that Dick and Michael have achieved in sustainably managing their property. It also provided an opportunity to create networks with other regions to facilitate the continued sharing of information and knowledge between producer groups across the state.



Demonstrating the Rappa



# Case Study: Mount Pleasant Beef Group



**The Mount Pleasant Beef Group get involved with programs to increase production by lowering cost of production such as the Confident Livestock Marketing Workshop held in Mount Barker.**

The Mount Pleasant Beef Group is a loose knit group of producers ranging from Tungkillo through Eden Valley to Keyneton. It contains stud and commercial breeders with breeds including Angus, Shorthorn, Simmentals and Santa Gertrudis.

The group began as a result of an MLA sponsored Beef event in 2009 which facilitated the group networking and learning from each other.

The group's focus has been to look at 'increasing production and profit by lowering cost of production while enhancing the environment and looking after the people'. This has been achieved by running pasture walks on local beef properties, an Adelaide Uni Genetics workshop, MLA Cost of Production, Beef CRC Maternal Productivity, a Better Bull

Selection Teleconference, The Grasslands Society of Southern Australia Mac Troupe Lecture by Tom Gubbins, TeMania at Hahndorf, and recently, some members attended the Beef Innovation Field Day at Lucindale. These workshops, lectures and field day sessions helped to provide practical skills to help improve the local beef production systems.

The group is now associated with the Winter Pasture NRM project through involvement and attendance at events. Landmark Mt Pleasant have also been instrumental in providing workshops and information through their beef information evenings which have included sessions on animal health and livestock nutrition.

## Dairy Discussion Group Composting Day- Project Support Officer, Sarah Weaver

Recently the Barossa Mid North dairy discussion group visited Kernich's dairy farm 'Carcoola' at Greenock to discuss composting and practical applications for the dairy industry. Peter Wadewitz, a commercial composting processor gave an introduction to the value and sustainability of composting on-farm. After lunch farmers took a tour of the Carcoola property who have successfully integrated composting into their dairy system. Some of the key concepts to come out of the day included;

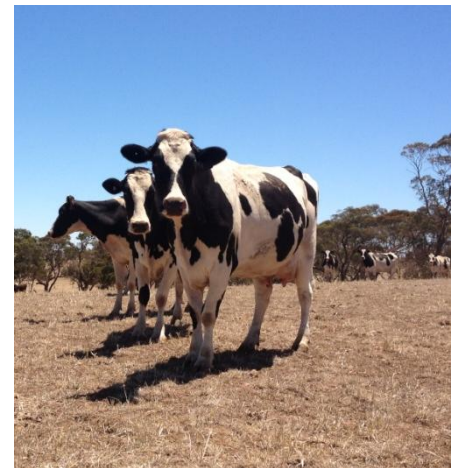
- Composting provides cheap NPK value, as well as additional benefit of increased microbial activity.
- The importance of correct Carbon: Nitrogen balance and the benefits of incorporating straw to sequester the carbon in the soil.

• Composting of material usually takes 5-6 weeks to breakdown, providing conditions are optimal (Moisture and pH).

• The ability to eliminate potential disease risk from manure by optimising temperature (55°C) and mixing frequency.

• Issues associated with spraying effluent once a year as soil becomes too wet inhibiting oxygen diffusion into the soil and suffocating established microbes. The most ideal application is to pump liquid weekly or apply straw to soak up moisture leading to less nitrogen being lost into atmosphere.

The day provided an excellent introduction to the opportunities of composting and well received by all. It was indicated there would be interest to delve further into the issues surrounding composting in the future.



**The Barossa Mid North Dairy Discussion Group received an introduction to composting and learnt about the practical applications for the dairy industry at their April meeting.**

## From the INBOX

### Evergraze

EverGraze is a program developing and testing new farming systems in different environments across the high rainfall zone of southern Australia.

They have recently released a Stocking Rate Calculator and a Feed Budget Rotation Planner.

Their recent newsletter also discusses a trial looking at weaning more lambs by 'flushing ewes' with green feed.

For further information see [www.evergraze.com.au](http://www.evergraze.com.au).

### Ag Ex Alliance

The Ag Ex Alliance work with SA broad-acre grain and livestock farmers to improve their profitability and sustainability. They have a website advertising many local events which you may be interested in. [More Info](#)

### Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project on FACEBOOK

Don't forget to 'like' the Winter Pasture Project to keep updated with latest news and events. Simply search 'Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project'.

## Further Information

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